

Seattle City Council

Culture, Civil Rights, Health, and Personnel Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 2:00 PM, February 13th, 2008

Words' Worth

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **John Burgess**

Today's poet is **Alexandra Oliver**

Canadian poet **Alexandra Oliver** has performed her work at places as diverse as Lollapalooza, the National Poetry Slam and the CBC Radio National Poetry Face-Off. Her first book, *Where the English Housewife Shines* (Tin Press, London, UK) was released in May 2007. She lives in Seattle with her husband and son, where she continues to write, perform and mentor young writers through Richard Hugo House.

For the Sensualist
by Alexandra Oliver

I met a man who made me think of cloves
And pepper on the eastern coastal air
And windy wheat that, cut, became the loaves,
And ginger in the wind that blew his hair.
Another made me think of bolts of silk;
Another of the oranges of Spain,
The shimmer of a stream of Jersey milk
And mushrooms that would mingle with the rain.
I never thought of socks or moldy bread,
Of sandwiches that lie around neglected,
That jobless wonder loafing in your bed
Who leaves you feeling cheap and disrespected.
So think about the world of useless oaves
And tell me if you smell the scent of cloves.

Ned's Trainers
(Or, Conjugal Jealousy From the Ground Up)
by Alexandra Oliver

How many times do I have to tell you
To get rid of those trainers.

I'll buy you new shoes,
Buy you many pairs.

What are you doing on Saturday?
We'll go shopping.

Do I keep things my ex-girlfriends gave me?
I'm tired of hearing about Ned,
His hair and his nice bike
And his horrible installation art.
Those giant white boxes that light up
The Canada Council gives him money to build.
Did the Canada Council give him money
So he could buy you those trainers?

Those trainers are ugly,
For one thing, they're white
They're all white
And they're dirty.

What are you, a nurse?

They look cheap.
They age you.
And they make you look
Like you're going to start running
And I'm going to have to beg you to come back.

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